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CRACOVIENSIA**

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pod redakcją

Cezarego Galewicza  
Jadwigi Pstrusińskiej  
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**MISCELLANEA EURASIATICA  
CRACOVIENSIA**

**Understanding Eurasia**

**From ancient times  
to the present day**

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Cezary Galewicz  
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## **The Military Reforms of Alexander the Great during His Campaigns in Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia**

*Marek Jan Olbrycht*

### **Preface**

The present study analyzes some aspects of the policies of Alexander the Great in the Iranian world<sup>1</sup>. Special attention is paid to the growth of Alexander's military force in 331-323 BC and the role played in it by the Iranian element, as well as Iranian influences on the Macedonian conqueror's warfare.

Alexander's monarchy – like his successors' states – was military in nature and based on the army. The composition and role of the armed forces, therefore, reflected the empire's nature. One indication of this is the rapid promotion of Iranians who, after 330 BC, were increasingly recruited to the king's forces.

In scholarly literature the issue of reinforcements for the Macedonian army operating in Asia has been raised quite often. Scholars usually agree that the majority of reinforcements were Macedonians, as well as Greek, Thracian and, to some extent, Anatolian, mercenaries. This appears to be true mainly for the period before 330 BC. After that date Iranians were more and more numerous in Alexander's army. Scholars, however, usually depreciate the significance of Iranian formations and suggest that positions

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<sup>1</sup> See: Bosworth, *Alexander*; Shahbazi, *Iranians*; Olbrycht, *Alexander the Great and the Iranian world*; idem, *Alexander the Great in the history of Iran*; idem, *Foundations of Alexander the Great in Iran and Middle Asia: origins and status of the colonists*.

of power (high commanders and officials) were held by Europeans up to the death of Alexander.

### Macedonia versus the Achaemenid empire

In 334, a new chapter had begun in the history of both the Balkans and Western and Central Asia. Macedonia and Persia rose to fight for hegemony, a fight that would, for the Achaemenid empire, become a struggle for survival. After Darius III's defeat at Gaugamela (331 BC), when Alexander stood at the gates of Babylonia, Susiana, and Persis, heretofore implacably hostile attitudes of Persians and other Iranians began to change. At that point, many Iranians concluded that Darius was bound to lose and that continued resistance was pointless. In 330 BC, Alexander ostentatiously stood up as an admirer of Iranian ways. Among Alexander's innovations in the year 330 BC, the most spectacular was introducing Iranians to his army and forming of Iranian guards.

At the heart of the Achaemenid armed forces were the royal guard units, called in Greek sources *doryphoroi*, *aichmophoroi*, *melophoroi* and *athanatoi* ("Immortals"). The main striking units formed Iranian cavalry contingents. The Achaemenids willingly made use of Asiatic and Greek mercenaries. In military operations the last Achaemenid king Darius III (336-330 BC) and his commanders did not exploit the most important advantage of Iranian cavalry, i.e. its mobility and speed. When a military leader appeared who was able to make use of those qualities – it was Spitamenes in Central Asia – Alexander's armed forces suffered some setbacks, and even defeats (battle at the Zeravshan/Polytimetos river). The heavy infantry of the Achaemenids (*kardakes*) as also the Immortals were not capable to rival with the Macedonian phalanx (the same applied to the formations of well trained Greek mercenaries) in a direct fight. But the Iranian archers, slingers and javelin-men could prove an efficient military instrument on condition of their employment within the framework of suitable tactics (and strategy). A foretaste of such developments was Alexander's setback in the first battle at Persian Gates in winter 331/330 BC, inflicted to him by Persian light infantry.

In the Macedonian army of Alexander, the perfect training of soldiers and the variety of combat formations call attention. The Companion cavalry (*hetairoi*) and the phalanx accounted for the main striking force of king's army. A large part played the excellent horsemen from Thessalia. Light infantry units were recruited from among the Balkan peoples like Agrianians, Thracians, and Paeonians (javelin-men on foot and on horse).

A very essential part played the archers, at first enrolled in Macedonia and Thracia, then also hired in Kreta. The Greek allies supplied hoplites and some horsemen who did not appear in none of the great battles fought by Alexander. Apparently, Greek mercenaries did not belong to the main striking force. During the campaigns in Asia and India they pacified conquered countries and were used in settling the colonies.

A comparison of the weapons employed in the Achaemenid and Macedonian armies demonstrates that the latter gained their superiority in some combats due to the use of extremely long infantry and cavalry spears or lances. To a certain degree the Macedonian victory over the Achaemenid armies was in fact the victory of Macedonian spears and lances (*xysta*, *dorata*, and *sarissai*) over shorter Persian spears and javelins (*palta*, *akontai*).

### The Iranian formations in Alexander's army (330-325 BC)

Babylonia and the satrapies of western Iran (Persis, Susiana, Media) as the former core of the Achaemenid empire were garrisoned by substantial Macedonian troops in 331-330 BC. In eastern Iranian Parthia, on the contrary, Alexander initiated a new policy towards the satrapies and did not establish large occupying contingents, which partially resulted from the lack of new soldiers. This pattern was employed in most of eastern Iranian satrapies. In every Iranian satrapy, an army could be raised from the local population, forming provincial troops under satraps' command. Alexander's satraps in eastern Iran and Central Asia, mostly Iranians, enjoyed from the beginning greater military and civil power than their colleagues in the west of Iran in Persis, Susiana and Media. After appointing Atropates satrap, Media was included in this system, whereas in Persis and Susiana satrapal military power remained more limited until 324 BC.

The last reported military reinforcements from Macedonia – 6,000 infantry and 500 cavalry – joined the Alexander's army at the end of the year 331 BC in Sittakene.<sup>2</sup> The number and character of mercenary troops as well as satrapal contingents from Thrace and Anatolia, recruited by Alexander's officers, were insufficient to keep up the strength of the royal army in Asia. Thus, Alexander had to make use of the local populations in those areas, in which his military activities were concentrated from 330 BC onwards, i.e. in the Iranian Plateau and in Central Asia.

<sup>2</sup> Between Babylon and Susa, cf. Diod. 17.65.1; Curt. 5.1.39-42; Arr. 3.16.10.

The first sizable Iranian units in Alexander's army are unequivocally attested in Central Asia in 328 BC. However, there are some passages in the sources informing about cavalry units of Iranian origin in the army of Alexander already in 330 BC. During Alexander's stay in Arachosia, his army was joined by a cavalry detachment of 200 Iranian "nobles" coming from Media<sup>3</sup>.

After Darius' death more than 1,000 Iranian dignitaries surrendered to Alexander. Most prominent among them was Darius' brother Oxyathres, now admitted into the ranks of the Companion cavalry<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, Oxyathres was given the command of a new guard formation consisting of Iranian nobles and called in the sources *doryphoroi*<sup>5</sup>. This guard was built up during Alexander's campaign in Central Asia<sup>6</sup>. In 330 BC, the Iranian court-guard *rhabdouchoi* was established, which controlled the access to the king also in regard to the Macedonians. The *rhabdouchoi* appeared later in a very important moment, when in the face of the Macedonian mutiny at Opis (324 BC) they were exclusively entrusted with guarding (*phylake*) the king<sup>7</sup>.

One of the elite formations in Alexander's army were the mounted javelin-men called *hippakontistai*, attested from 330 BC onwards during the campaigns in Hyrcania, eastern Iran and Central Asia. The core of the formation was made up by the Iranians with an addition of *prodromoi* and Paeonians.

In Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander had to employ new strategy and tactics, better suited to local conditions and enemy capabilities which revealed vulnerabilities of the Macedonian army. Spitamenes and his superb Bactrian and Sogdian cavalry forces, supported by the cavalry of the nomadic Dahae (mounted archers) and Massagetae (including heavily-armed horsemen) rather avoided bigger battles and specialized in hit-and-run raids and ambushes<sup>8</sup>. The mobility of Spitamenes' forces and his skill of attacking in the least expected place and time deprived Alexander of the strategic initiative, the thing which occurred for the first time during his campaign in Asia. In 329 BC, a sizable Macedonian corps under Pharnu-

<sup>3</sup> Curt. 7.3.4; Arr. 3.19.7f.

<sup>4</sup> Plut. Alex. 43.7. Cf. Curt. 6.2.11.

<sup>5</sup> Diod. 17.77.4.

<sup>6</sup> Curt. 7.10.9; Diod. 17 (arg).

<sup>7</sup> Plut. Alex. 51.1; 71.3; Diod. 17.77.4.

<sup>8</sup> See Olbrycht, *Partia*; idem, *Beziehungen*.

ches' command suffered a complete defeat at the Zeravshan river<sup>9</sup>. Spitamenes was conquered only in 328 due to the operations led by the corps of Koinos consisting mainly of the newly acquired Iranian allies (at least 9,000 soldiers). Alexander himself adopted much of Spitamenes' tactics, introducing mounted archers into the position of the picked protecting and striking military force and employing large numbers of Central Asian cavalry in his own army<sup>10</sup>.

After the victory over Spitamenes and before the Indian campaign, Alexander reformed his Companion cavalry (*hetairoi*), the key formation in his army. The Companion cavalry in Alexander's army numbered 1,800 in 334<sup>11</sup>. During the campaign in Asia, Alexander received twice cavalry reinforcements from Macedonia which included 300 horsemen in Gordion (333) and 500 horsemen in Sittakene (between Babylonia and Susiana, in winter 331/330)<sup>12</sup>. For the years 330-324, no other reinforcements for Alexander's Macedonian cavalry are recorded. The losses of the Companions were substantial. At the Graneikos about 25 *hetairoi* fell although it was a relatively quick victory<sup>13</sup>. For the battle at Issos, the sources estimate Macedonian cavalry casualties at about 150<sup>14</sup>. It seems that the number refers principally to the Companion cavalry and *prodromoi* losses. At Gaugamela, 60 *hetairoi* were killed in one of the fiercest clashes<sup>15</sup>, but there must have been other casualties during the whole battle<sup>16</sup>. Losses in minor fightings up to Gaugamela are not recorded but can be suggested at about 50<sup>17</sup>. Thus, casualties figures of the Companion cavalry up to the winter 331/330 must amount more than 200 killed and a number of wounded. Considering the losses suffered in killed, wounded and trans-

<sup>9</sup> Arr. 4.5.4-9; 4.6.1-2; Curt. 7.7.31-39.

<sup>10</sup> A fundamental role in allowing us to establish what equipment and arms were used by the Central Asian warriors play archaeological materials including representations of warriors and genuine weapons discovered at Tacht-i Sangin (Tajikistan), Chirik-Rabat, Koi-krylgan-kala, and Chumbuz-tepe (Usbekistan). Cf. Litvinskiy, *Temple of Oxus*.

<sup>11</sup> Diod. 17.17.4. Cf. Diod. 17.57.1; Arr. 3.11.8.

<sup>12</sup> Arr. 1.29.4 (Gordion); Diod. 17.65.1; Curt. 5.7.40; Arr. 3.16.11 (Sittakene).

<sup>13</sup> Arr. 1.16.4.

<sup>14</sup> Curt. 3.11.27; Iust. 11.9.10; Diod. 17.36.6.

<sup>15</sup> Arr. 3.15.2. For the cavalry losses in the Macedonian army, see Aperghis, *Hipparchies*, 136.

<sup>16</sup> Diodorus (17.61.3) speaks of 500 killed Macedonians, while Curtius (4.16.26) of „under 300”.

<sup>17</sup> See Aperghis, *Hipparchies*, 137.

ferred horsemen the Companion cavalry at Gaugamela was about the same size as when Alexander crossed the Hellespont<sup>18</sup>.

The harsh conditions of the marches in Iran and in Central Asia, and the fierce battles as well minor engagements from Areia up to the Iaxartes (Syrdaria) must have caused significant losses among the Companions<sup>19</sup>. Just in one battle at the Polytimetos river about 60 Companions were killed (329)<sup>20</sup>. Some of the Companions made up the commanding staff of the troops left in the subjugated satrapies, as in Arachosia, Bactria and Sogdiana. Even given the possibility that the Macedonian *prodromoi* were incorporated in the Companions before 327<sup>21</sup>, it is hardly possible that the Companion cavalry numbered at the eve of the Indian war more than 1,800-2,000 men from Macedonia.

Originally the Companions were under the command of Philotas<sup>22</sup>. In Drangiana (330 BC), Alexander put two hipparchs in charge of the Companions, Hephaistion and Kleitos, dividing the Companion formation into two parts<sup>23</sup>. There is no evidence how the newly established command worked<sup>24</sup>.

At the battle of Gaugamela there were eight squadrons (*ilai*) of the Companions numbering 1,800 horse<sup>25</sup>. This figure includes 7 normal *ilai* and the Royal Squadron (*basilike ile*), the latter probably at double strength of 400 men<sup>26</sup>. In Sittakene, Alexander undertook changes in cavalry (late in 331). He formed two *lochoi* within each *ile*. Previously an *ile* had not been subdivided<sup>27</sup>. From 329 onwards, there are references to

<sup>18</sup> Marsden, Gaugamela, 69, enumerates 2,071 Companions which seems too many taking the losses into consideration.

<sup>19</sup> See, e. g., Curt. 7.9.16.

<sup>20</sup> Curt. 7.7.29; Arr. 4.3.6, 4.6.2.

<sup>21</sup> The scouts (*prodromoi*) disappear from the sources after 328, cf. Arr. 4.4.6. See Brunt, Alexander's Macedonian Cavalry 28. The Macedonian scouts numbered initially about 300 men, thus considering losses their total in 329-328 must have been very limited compared with the number of the Companions, cf. Olbrycht, Alexander the Great and the Iranian world, 137.

<sup>22</sup> Diod. 17.17.4, Arr. 3.11.8. His title was probably *hipparches*, cf. Brunt, Alexander's Macedonian Cavalry 28.

<sup>23</sup> Arr. 3.27.4. Arrian calls the body of the Companions "*taxis*".

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Bosworth, Commentary I, 365.

<sup>25</sup> Arr. 3.11.8.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Diod. 17.57.1. See Sekunda, Alexander, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Arr. 3.16.11.

hipparchies as regular units of cavalry<sup>28</sup>. Overall, the Companion cavalry operating in Central Asia and India was divided into brigades (*hipparchies*), squadrons (*ilai*), and *lochoi* renamed into centuries (*hekatoustai*)<sup>29</sup>.

As to the numbers of squadrons or hipparchies of the *hetairoi* after 331, the question has long been disputed. Likewise, the numerical force of these units in India is debatable. In his *Tactics*, Arrian describes the organization of the Macedonian army and claims that each of two smaller units made up one larger unit. The account explicitly names a *hipparchia* as a unit numbering 512 horsemen<sup>30</sup>.

While in Central Asia, Alexander reformed *hetairoi* cavalry, adding to its numbers. Early in the Indian war (327 BC), Arrian mentions the Vanguard Squadron (*agema*) and "up to four hipparchies" of *hetairoi* in the elite corps commanded by Alexander in the attack on the land of the Aspasians. At that stage, corps under Krateros and Hephaistion operated separately. Arrian, in reckoning the strength of Hephaistion's corps fighting in the Kophen valley, mentions a half of *hetairoi* cavalry as part of it<sup>31</sup>. It can thus be inferred that Alexander had in his army a total of eight hipparchies of the *hetairoi* including the *agema*. In his campaign against the Mallians, after the Hydaspes battle, Alexander divided his army into three corps. Arrian mentions two hipparchies in Perdikkas' corps and another two in Peithon's, and "half of the *hetairoi*" in the king's corps, which suggests that at that time there were in all eight hipparchies of the *hetairoi*<sup>32</sup>. Such information confirms the suggestions that in 327-326 – both at the start of the invasion of India and in later campaigns in 326 – there were in existence eight hipparchies of the *hetairoi*.

<sup>28</sup> In Sogdiana, Ptolemy captured Bessos taking with him 3 hipparchies of the Companions, and all the *hippakontistai*, see Arr. 3.29.7. The same combination is recorded in the battle at the Iaxartes, Arr. 4.4.7. It seems that the use of the term "hipparchy" in the sources for the events before 330 is non-technical. Thus, in Diodorus 17.57.1ff. the word "hipparchy" probably denotes an *ile*, cf. Griffith, Note, 70. In Arrian 1.28.4 a "hipparchy" of the Companions is given apart from other troops to Parmenion in winter 334/333.

<sup>29</sup> The division of the Companions into centuries (*hekatoustai*), squadrons (*ilai*), and brigades (*hipparchies*) is recorded in Arr. 6.27.6 (*ilai*, *hekatoustai*), and 6.21.3 (*agema*, *ilai*, hipparchies). Arr. 3.16.11 mentions *lochoi* as a subdivision of the *ilai* (the passage refers to 331 BC).

<sup>30</sup> Arr. *Tactics* 18.

<sup>31</sup> Arr. 4.24.1, 4.22.7.

<sup>32</sup> Arrian 6.6.1, 6.6.4, 6.7.2.

During the reforms of the years 330-327, a new cavalry Vanguard Brigade was formed called *agema*. First technical mention of it is attested for the year 327<sup>33</sup>. It seems that during the Indian war the *agema* numbered 500 men<sup>34</sup>. According to estimates, hipparchies in India numbered about 500 soldiers each<sup>35</sup>.

In preparing to attack the populous and prosperous Indian lands, Alexander had to expand his army, including the *hetairoi* formations, and he called upon the Iranians, who had excellent horsemen<sup>36</sup>. While it is true that mentions of Iranians in Alexander's army in India are sparse, even in descriptions of the decisive Hydaspes showdown, this is due to the selective nature of the sources. It is certain that the king's own elite corps on the Hydaspes included, next to Dahaeans *hippotoxotai*, Bactrians, Sogdians, and "Scythians" (Massagetae)<sup>37</sup>.

Shortly before the Indian war, Alexander is said to have formed a new infantry formation called *Argyraspides*<sup>38</sup>; that term is otherwise attested as the label for one of Achaemenid guard units<sup>39</sup>.

The army which Alexander led to India was extremely large and numbered about 120,000 soldiers<sup>40</sup>. The Iranians formed the majority of the invading force. Sources inform about reinforcements of Greek and Thracian mercenaries coming to India alongside with a mighty corps of 30,000 infantry of the Iranian *epigonoï*<sup>41</sup>. The *epigonoï* joined Alexander in India but afterwards were sent back to Iran to complete their training.

In the battle at the Hydaspes river (326 BC) the picked corps of Alexander embraced several thousands of Iranian troops. Under Alexander's

<sup>33</sup> Arr. 4.24.1, see Berve I, 109. Curt. 4.13.26 names *agema* at Issos, but it probably refers to the Royal Guard called at that stage *ile basilike*. Cf. Berve, *ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> In the Successors period the *agema* was often 300 (Diod. 19.29.5, 19.28.3) which according to some scholars reflects Alexander's system. Cf. arguments in Aperghis, Hipparchies 141f.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Olbrycht, *Alexander the Great and the Iranian world*, 163f.

<sup>36</sup> The issue is discussed in detail in *ibidem*, 110-141.

<sup>37</sup> Arr. 5.11.3, 5.12.2; Curt. 8.14.5, 9.2.24. The Iranians from Bactria, Sogdiana and the "Scythians" are recorded for the Indian campaign after the Hydaspes battle in general enumerations only, cf. Curt. 9.2.24 (Scythians, Bactrians, Sogdians, Dahae); 9.2.33 (Scythians, Bactrians).

<sup>38</sup> Curt. 8.5.4, Iust. 12.7.5 (to be identified with Alexander's hypaspists).

<sup>39</sup> Iamblich. Babyl. Fragm. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Curt. 8.5.4. Cf. Nearchos: FGrHist 133 F 1=Arr. Ind. 19.5; Plut. Alex. 66.5: 120,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry.

<sup>41</sup> Diod. 17.95.4; Curt. 9.3.21.

command fought there 3 Macedonian and 2 (or 3) Iranian hipparchies of the Companions, supported by the mixed guard *agema*. As a whole, the Iranians made up more than the half of Alexander's attacking cavalry force at the Hydaspes, totaling 5,000 men<sup>42</sup>. A great role among the infantry units played archers<sup>43</sup>, whose backbone formed the Iranians as well.

### The Iranian predominance in Alexander's armed forces in the years 324-323

After the campaigns in India and southern Iran Alexander undertook deep reforms in his armed forces continuing his pro-Iranian policy. In 324 BC, the royal army was joined at Susa by 30,000 young Iranians, called *epigonoï*<sup>44</sup>. Their arrival is said to have grieved the Macedonians. Alexander had created the *epigonoï* in winter 328/327 or spring 327, and they had been trained in Macedonian weapons and fighting techniques.

A substantial reorganization of the Companion cavalry took place shortly after the Indian campaign and the hipparchies' number was that time diminished from 8 to 4. Conceivably each of the former 4 Macedonian hipparchies was united with its Iranian counterpart. Thus four new big hipparchies were created, each consisting of 1 former Macedonian and 1 former Iranian hipparchy. Additionally, Alexander established a new fifth hipparchy, which "was not entirely barbarian"<sup>45</sup>. Apparently, it was a mixed Iranian-Macedonian formation, dominated by the Asians.

At Opis on the Tigris Alexander made decisive steps in his Iranian policy, especially with regard to the composition of his armed forces (summer of 324). The Iranians were given military commands over the royal divisions (*taxeis*)<sup>46</sup>, and the Iranian troops were divided into *lochoi*<sup>47</sup>. Macedonian veterans were replaced by Iranian phalangites (*epigonoï*)<sup>48</sup>. The king created the Iranian formations of *pezhetairoi*, *asthetairoi* and *argyraspides*, labeling them with names hitherto reserved for Macedonian units<sup>49</sup>. A new royal Iranian infantry guard (*agema*)<sup>50</sup> and the separate

<sup>42</sup> Arr. 5.16.4.

<sup>43</sup> Arr. 5.12.2.

<sup>44</sup> Diod. 107.108.1-3; Arr. 7.6.1; Plut. Alex. 71.1

<sup>45</sup> Arr. 7.6.4.

<sup>46</sup> Arr. 7.11.1, 7.11.3; Diod. 17.109.3.

<sup>47</sup> Arr. 7.11.3.

<sup>48</sup> Diod. 17.110.1-2; Iust. 12.11.4; 12.12.4.

<sup>49</sup> Arr. 7.11.3.

<sup>50</sup> Diod. 17.110.1; Arr. 7.11.3; Iust. 12.12.3-4.

Iranian cavalry formations of *hetairoi* and *agema basilike* were established<sup>51</sup>.

In 323, the satrap of Persis Peukestas brought to Babylon 20,000 Persian archers and slingers as well as a sizable number of the warlike Cossaeans and Tapurian soldiers<sup>52</sup>. With these, Alexander formed a mixed infantry army, comprising files of sixteen men (4 Macedonians and 12 Iranians). The Asians kept their native fashion and were to fight as light infantrymen whereas Macedonians were equipped as phalangites. The new army was to conquer Arabia<sup>53</sup>. The effectiveness of such mixed formations was proven by Pyrrhus in his wars against Rome<sup>54</sup>. Xenophon describes a similar Achaemenid formation, which perhaps to a certain extent was imitated by Alexander<sup>55</sup>.

In 324-323 BC, the number of Macedonians in Asia after the veterans set off for Macedonia was drastically reduced. Alexander demonstrated a decisive reliance on Iranian troops having replaced the Macedonians. At Babylon Alexander had in his field army about 70-75,000 Iranians and not more than 6-7,000 Macedonians. Such proportions in the military sphere coincided with the political structure in Alexander's empire.

#### Conclusions - the Iranians in Alexander's armed forces

The military supremacy, based on armed forces, accounted for the pivot in the process of constructing Alexander's empire. The increase of the Iranian factor in terms of fighting capabilities and numerical strength in the army of Alexander was paralleled by the process of the precipitation of Macedonians from the exclusively leading position in the royal armed forces.

In the Indian campaign (327-325 BC), the Iranians constituted a numerically prevailing element in Alexander's army. The reforms of Alexander's last years (324-323 BC) embraced the use of the Iranian phalanx (*epigonoi*) instead of Macedonians and the enrollment of other Iranian infantry and the cavalry formations in the king's army.

In winter 325/324 Alexander ordered to dismiss contingents of Greek mercenaries enlisted by satraps and strategs in the provinces. The Greek

<sup>51</sup> Arr. 7.11.3.

<sup>52</sup> Arr. 7.23.1. Diod. 17.110.2.

<sup>53</sup> Arr. 7.23.3-4.

<sup>54</sup> Polyb. 18.28.

<sup>55</sup> Xen. *Kyrupaideia* 6.3.21-27 (completed about 360 BC).

mercenaries practically disappeared from the field army of the king, being replaced by Iranians and auxiliary contingents recruited in Asia Minor.

Alexander appreciated qualities and skills of Iranian cavalry formations (his tactics being influenced by those of Spitamenes) which splendidly proved themselves in the harsh war conditions in Western and Central Asia and India. Sizable detachments of the native horsemen appeared in Alexander's army in Central Asia. At the same time the Companion cavalry was augmented by the admission of many Iranians into its ranks. In Alexander's tactics employed in Eastern Iran, Central Asia and India the part played by cavalry became even more significant than before, mainly due to the frequent use of (mostly Iranian) mounted javelin-men and (exclusively Iranian) mounted archers. More and more Alexander employed tactics of joining different kinds of arms with the growing contribution of light infantry formations recruited from Iranian archers, slingers and javelin-men. The final stage of this process were the reforms at Opis and Babylon, resulting in the creation of a new army which was to conquer Arabia. It is not surprising that the Iranians took over certain elements from the Macedonian warfare, including the use of long lances by cavalry. This seemingly not significant innovation contributed to the rising of the new type of heavily-armoured cavalry, called cataphracts, celebrating triumphs in the Parthian epoch (247 before Chr. – 226 after Chr.).

In contemporary research, Alexander's pro-Iranian policies are often viewed as merely "pragmatic"<sup>56</sup>. Nonetheless, claims for narrow pragmatism fall short of explaining many of Alexander's fundamental and far-reaching moves such as the creation of an Iranian phalanx to replace the existing Macedonian force. The complete dominance of Iranians in Alexander's army in 324-323 BC is another move overstepping the boundaries of simple necessity<sup>57</sup>.

Scholars usually depreciate the significance of Iranian formations and suggest that positions of power (like commanders and officials) were held by Europeans. Similarly, reforms in Opis, where Iranians took over numerous commands, are often seen as ephemeral. However, the available evidence implies that the pro-Iranian military reforms lasted until Alexander's death.

<sup>56</sup> Fredricksmeier, *Alexander*, 165f.

<sup>57</sup> Olbrycht, *Alexander the Great and the Iranian world*, 192-204.



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## Abbreviations

(The list which follows is designed to make it easy for the reader to trace the source quotations)

Arr.	= Flavius Arrianus, <i>Anabasis Alexandrou</i> ( <i>The Expedition of Alexander</i> )
Arr. Ind.	= Flavius Arrianus, <i>Indike</i> ( <i>Indian History</i> )
Arr. Tactics	= Flavius Arrianus, <i>Taktika</i> ( <i>Tactics</i> )
Curt.	= Curtius Rufus, <i>Historia Alexandri Magni</i>
Diod.	= Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca</i>
FGrHist	= <i>Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , ed. By F. Jacoby.
Iambl. Babyl.	= Iamblichus, <i>Babyloniaca</i>
Iust.	= Iustinus (Justin), <i>Epitome</i>
Plut. Alex.	= Plutarchus, <i>Alexander</i>
Polyb.	= Polybius, <i>Historiai</i> ( <i>Histories</i> )
Xen. Kyrupaideia	= Xenophon, <i>Kyrupaideia</i> ( <i>The Education of Cyrus</i> )